

1 RESOLUTION

2 of the

3 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION BOARD

4 of the

5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

6 of the

7 MID-REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS OF NEW MEXICO

8 (R-03-09 MTB)

9 **MPO POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING**
10 **REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FEDERAL**
11 **TRANSPORTATION ACT (TEA-21)**
12

13 WHEREAS, the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) is the
14 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning
15 Area (AMPA); and

16 WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Transportation Board (MTB) of MRCOG is charged
17 with developing regional transportation policies, plans, and programs for the AMPA; and

18 WHEREAS, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) expires
19 on September 30, 2003; and

20 WHEREAS, the MTB supports the basic principles set forth within TEA-21, which
21 includes more transportation funding, more responsibility for and cooperation between
22 local governments and the state, enhanced regional planning, appropriate consideration
23 for all modes of transportation, greater flexibility and simplicity, and assurances that
24 transportation-derived revenues are used for transportation purposes; and

25 WHEREAS, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency (ISTEA) and TEA-21
26 recognized that major infrastructure decisions have impacts on the region and
27 communities, that local elected officials have the closest links to the State's residents,

1 and that MPOs provide a valuable service in bringing local elected officials together to
2 develop regional transportation plans and programs; and

3 WHEREAS, the Administration and the Congress of the United States should
4 continue to recognize the major responsibility and role local governments have in
5 maintaining the national transportation system and to empower local officials to be
6 directly involved in the planning and programming of federal transportation funds; and

7 WHEREAS, TEA-21 reauthorization is of extreme importance to the citizens
8 living in the AMPA, the State of New Mexico, and the United States; and

9 WHEREAS, transportation infrastructure and mobility are paramount to the
10 economic sustainability, growth, and security of the citizens of the AMPA, the state and
11 the nation.

12 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Metropolitan Transportation
13 Board of the Mid-Region Council of Governments of New Mexico that the Metropolitan
14 Transportation Board encourages the Administration and the Congress of the United
15 States to support and enact a Reauthorization Bill for Surface Transportation that
16 includes the following:

17 1. Protect and maintain TEA-21's core principles. These principles include more
18 transportation funding, more responsibility for and cooperation between local
19 governments and the states, enhanced regional planning, appropriate
20 consideration for all modes of transportation, greater flexibility and simplicity, and
21 assurances that the transportation-derived revenues will be used for
22 transportation purposes.

23 2. Protect, maintain, and enhance the funding allocation. Nationwide, the funds
24 available for transportation fall short of meeting transportation needs.
25 Additionally, funding fluctuations can cause serious problems in project delivery.

1 The funding allocation should be protected, maintained, and enhanced by:

2 a. Maintaining the firewalls established by TEA-21;

3 b. Enhancing the levels of funding to the States and MPOs by eliminating

4 obligation authority constraints;

5 c. Maintaining and improving Revenue Aligned Budget Authority (RABA) by

6 refining it to limit large fluctuations; and

7 d. Providing more opportunity to "flex" funds from one funding category to

8 another.

9 3. Increase and encourage cooperation with and support for local decision-makers.

10 As regions develop, regional forums and institutions are an effective way of

11 dealing with transportation, transit, air quality, water, economic development, and

12 other issues. As long as regional organizations continue to be relatively weak

13 compared to state agencies, it is difficult to develop and implement regional

14 approaches to these issues. The role of regional organizations as the forum and

15 voice of local decision-makers needs to be strengthened and enhanced as a

16 means for ensuring coordination between the State and local governments. This

17 support for local jurisdictions could be accomplished by:

18 a. Ensuring any increases in funding to the States are passed through to

19 local levels by allocation to the MPOs;

20 b. Increasing MPO planning funds and restoring to MPOs the minimum

21 guarantee sub-allocation as was the case with the ISTEA;

22 c. Requiring that annual revenue forecasts and financial plans be developed

23 cooperatively and mutually agreed upon by the States, MPOs and Transit

24 Operators;

25 d. Increasing funding for safety and suballocation of safety funds to MPOs;

1 and

2 e. Providing MPO officials with more authority to decide how federal funds

3 are utilized in MPO areas.

4 4. Increase flexibility and streamlining throughout the funding program. Increasing

5 program flexibility will ensure more projects are completed in a timely manner.

6 Increased flexibility and timeliness can be accomplished by:

7 a. Making major changes to or streamlining the federal process

8 (environmental/funding) to improve project delivery;

9 b. Implementing provisions to assure that local projects are not delayed by

10 lengthy state review processes, including guaranteed turn-around periods

11 for specific review items and allowing concurrent review processes;

12 c. Delegating more review and authority to currently self-certified jurisdictions

13 and lowering the size threshold for self-certification;

14 d. Focusing the conformity process on the Long Range Transportation Plan

15 (LRTP) rather than the short-range Transportation Improvement Program

16 (TIP);

17 e. Increasing the LRTP update cycle from three years to five and the TIP

18 update cycle from two to three years for all areas; and

19 f. MPOs, including the ability to identify and program funds for their areas.

20 5. Recognize the importance of transportation to Homeland Security. Homeland

21 Security is one of the Nation's top priorities. However, the Administration and

22 Congress need to look beyond appropriations for direct measures and realize


23 that the interconnected regional, state, and interstate transportation infrastructure

24 and the mobility it provides are paramount to the Nation's security and its ability


25 to function and respond in times of emergency. The transportation system must

1 be adequately prepared to handle a range of emergency services, relief,
2 transportation information, and/or evacuation programs through continued and
3 increased investment in communication and transportation technologies such as
4 freeway management systems, traveler information systems, and other Intelligent
5 Transportation Systems technologies.
6 PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 27th day of February, 2003 by the
7 Metropolitan Transportation Board of the Board of Directors of the Mid-Region Council
8 of Governments of New Mexico.

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Hector Gonzales, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Board

ATTEST:


Lawrence Rael, Executive Director